



## Unmet Needs of Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease Receiving in-center Hemodialysis in Pampanga, Philippines: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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### Abstract

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) involves progressive kidney damage that eventually leads to loss of filtration function, necessitating renal replacement therapy. In the Philippines, hemodialysis is the predominant treatment, where blood is externally filtered to remove waste before being returned to the body. Despite its life-sustaining benefits, the procedure's complexity can lead to serious complications, contributing to comorbidities or mortality. Many patients find the treatment, care, and support inadequate due to these complications and the exhausting nature of hemodialysis. This study aims to explore the unmet needs of patients receiving in-center hemodialysis to improve care delivery. This qualitative study was conducted in three locations in Pampanga, Philippines: San Fernando, Angeles, and Guagua. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 45 participants, comprising 20 patients, 15 caregivers, and 10 healthcare providers involved in dialysis treatment. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. Thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes, with MAXQDA software used for data management. This involved data familiarization, coding, theme identification, theme refinement, definition and naming, and reporting. Code and word frequencies were analyzed to understand patterns and relationships among the data provided by the participants. The study uncovered several key unmet needs: insufficient information about financial assistance and limited understanding of disease progression and treatment side effects; overwhelming healthcare costs exacerbated by inadequate financial support; practical challenges; for example, transportation difficulties and limited mobility; lack of accessible mental health services; insufficient empathy from providers; and social isolation among patients. These findings suggested the need for centralized information resources, increased subsidies, improved transportation services, integrated mental health support, caregiver education, and peer support groups. Addressing the unmet needs of CKD patients undergoing in-center hemodialysis in Pampanga required systematic improvements in renal care delivery through targeted interventions and better resource allocation.

**Keywords:** *unmet needs, chronic kidney disease (CKD), hemodialysis, patient care, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), Philippines*